decline so far as carpet exports from India to Germany & USA are concerned, certain non-official agencies and media in those countries have highlighted the alleged employment of child labour in the Indian Carpet Industry.

(b) Various steps are being taken to tackle the problem within the country and to project the reality of the situation abroad. The steps taken are:

(i) Registration of looms in the States of Bihar and U.P.

(ii) Special cells created to ensure implementation of existing laws prohibiting employment of children.

(iii) The carpet Export Promotion Council (CEPC) and the All India Carpet Manufacturers Association (AICMA) adopted a code of conduct whereby members will ensure that loom-owners do not employ children.

(iv) Govt. of Uttar Pradesh has formed a State Level Committee for the eradication of child labour.

(v) 20 special schools have been set up in U.P. A total of 1,000 child labour withdrawn from Carpet Industry are being provided with non-formal education, nutrition, health care, stipend, vocational training, recreation etc. in these special schools.

(vi) 8 programmes have been taken up through Non-Governmental voluntary organisations working in East U.P. in collaboration with the ILO for rehabilitation of working children withdrawn from carpet industry.

(vii) In order to discourage child labour, U.P. Government has issued a notification stipulating that the minimum wages fixed for adolescents and children would be 99% and 95% respectively of the wages fixed for adults.

Equal wage for equal work for women

766. SHRI KRISHAN LAL SHARMA: Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that there is a widespread discrimination against women in regard to employment and payment of wage; and

(b) if so, what steps are being taken by Government to ensure that the principle of equal work and equal wages is strictly enforced in this matter?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR (SHRI P. A. SANGMA): (a) and (b) It is in the notice of Government that there are instances of discrimination against women in regard to employment and payment of wage etc. In order to prevent discrimination on grounds of sex in recruitment and in conditions of service subsequent to recruitment in payment of remuneration, promotion, training, transfer etc., the Equal Remuneration Act, 1976 has been enacted. The Act covers all categories of employment and prescribes stringent penalties for violation of its provisions. Cognizance of an offence under the Act can be taken by the competent Courts *suo moto* or on a complaint being made by an aggrieved person.

In addition, voluntary organisations have been recognised, by Central and State Governments for the purpose of lodging complaints against employers for violation of the provisions of the Act.

Appropriate governments have notified the enforcement agencies who are required to make regular inspection and prosecute the offenders in case provisions of the Act are found to have been violated.